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A Blow at the Root of all Evil.

Being the Substance of

A

S E R M O N,

Preached

By THOMAS TAYLOR.



IF ANY MAN LOVE THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE
FATHER IS NOT IN HIM. 1 John, ii. 15.

*Avaritia est summa idolatria, quæ creaturas in locum Dei
collocat.* GERH. MEDITAT.

L E E D S:

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A SERMON, &c.

For the love of money is the root of all evil.

1 Tim. vi. 10.

THERE is not an evil to which our fallen nature is liable, or in danger of, but we are strongly guarded against in the Book of God: and those things which we are in the greatest danger of, we are most frequently, and in the strongest terms, cautioned against. For instance, what is human nature more prone to than Idolatry? and how closely does God press the danger upon our minds? yea, has made an express command against it, and has given us some very awful instances of his just displeasure inflicted upon idolaters; which you may see at large in the History of the Old Testament.

As the Almighty has shewn his just displeasure against Idolatry, so has he given his testimony against Pride, *for he knoweth the proud afar off*, and on that account expelled the aspiring Angels out of Heaven, and cast them into the deep, the place assigned for all the Children of Pride.

The same Just and Holy Being has given us to understand his just abhorrence of Unbelief; and we have many instances of the perdition of unbelievers in this world, and their awful doom is expressly declared in the world to come, for the final *unbeliever shall be damned*; yea, *the unbeliever shall not see life*; but *the wrath of God abideth on him*. Nay, as he makes God a liar, so he is condemned already.

Now as Idolatry, Pride, Unbelief, are all dar-
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ing and capital sins, and against which a holy, jealous God has shewn his just indignation; so Covetousness, or, as it is expressed in the text, *the love of money*, is a compound of them all; yea, the father and begetter of them, for it is said to be *the root*, not of some, *but of all evil*. And what does God say concerning the professors of religion of old? read and tremble, Jer. viii. 10. *Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to those who shall inherit them: Why will he do so? because every one of them, from the least even unto the greatest, is given to covetousness, from the prophet even to the priest. For the sin of covetousness God smote Ephraim, and delivered the whole Jewish nation into the hands of their enemies.*

St. Paul calls it twice in one chapter, *filthy lucre*, and seems at a loss to stamp it with some epithet sufficiently vile and detestable.

Let me, therefore, try to drag out to light, this dishonourer of God, this murderer of souls, this first-born son of perdition; and I pray that every heart may be open to conviction, and make the impartial enquiry, Am I the man? and upon conviction, from this very moment put the evil far away. But as it is a sin which intrenches itself behind so many excuses, great care must be taken, or you will certainly over-look it. *The love of money is the root of all evil*: Not money itself, it is the useful instrument of commerce, and very helpful in society; it is the *love of it*, the mind being set upon it: there the disease lies.

Let me therefore impartially enquire,

What the *Love of Money* is :

And then, the Charge which is brought against it.

I. When the thoughts are frequent in wandering after the mammon of unrighteousness, it is plain,

plain, there is an inordinate desire of the same. The thoughts seem intended by that expression frequently used by our Lord, *the heart*: *Where your treasure is, there is your heart also*. If, therefore, your treasure is in heaven; if what you deem your chief good be there, the object of your wishes, then will your heart, that is, your thoughts, as naturally bend thither as the stream runs down the hill; and if any thing interrupts the current thereof, it will not run till it returns to its channel again. The Apostle expresses the same thing by the term *affection*: *Set your affection on things above, not on the things of the earth*; and, certainly, whatever our affections may be placed upon, is the object of our love; and if the gaining money be that object, than have we the love of money in us, *which is the root of all evil*.

2. Another proof of the love of money is, when the desire is strong after it. As long as we are in the world, we must have something to do in it, and in a moderate degree there must be some thinking about it; there are few things can be transacted without thoughts; so, in like manner, there will be a moderate desire, which is lawful. Hence a man sows and tills his land, it is lawful for him to desire a crop; a man is in trade, it is lawful for him to desire a moderate degree of gain, which may be an adequate compensation for his time and trouble; but the desire I am militating against is, that mentioned in the context, *they that will be rich*; who are bent upon it, who are determined, come what will, that this shall be the mark they aim at; they will fall into divers temptations, and into the snare of the devil. This desire eats up the vitals of religion, and will not suffer the soul to thrive. We may call it, the consumption of the soul, and unless it is cured, death, eternal death, must inevitably ensue. Now, what-

ever the thoughts are desirous after, that is the subject we love to talk about ; we naturally slide into it ; the centre where we rest. Hence we find great numbers, who even pretend to something of religion, in whom it is easy to perceive very little taste for spiritual conversation ; they will give a dry assent and consent to what is said, but the tone of the voice, the accent, the attitude, plainly testify it is not their beloved subject. But change the subject ; let it turn upon trade, land, cattle, price of stocks, or the like, and you shall find the man is quite awake, and as brisk and lively as a bee. It is the very same in what he hears as what he speaks ; let him hear ever so excellent a sermon ; let the subject be ever so important, yet it has no charms for him, it does not make his heart glad ; he can yawn and gape under it with the greatest indifference ; and why ? Why ! because it is not the subject of his thoughts or desires, it is not the thing which he wants ; he loves the world, and that is the theme which will charm his ears, and touch his heart in the most sensible part. What satisfaction can such a man find in reading the bible, or any thing else which treats of God, and Christ, and Eternal Life, when he feels so little desire about the matter ? The dear Redeemer, his sufferings, blood, merit, spirit, ways, people, promises, threatenings, or commands, are all flat, insipid, and wholly tasteless.

O, what a wretched animal is a man of this stamp ! How utterly useless ? Yea, hateful in his day and generation ? But more especially if he is a professor of religion : Then he carries the foul contagion with him wherever he goes ; so that he does not go alone to hell, *with a lie in his right hand*, but draws others along with him.

3. It is plain, a man loves money when he feels an uncommon joy in gaining money. Then, perhaps,

haps, while the honey is falling, he is chearful, and quite good humoured with every body about him, because what he delights in now increates: herein he has his reward. He forms a thousand pleasing schemes, like the rich fool, and proposes some time to say, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry."

We ought, undoubtedly, to be thankful to the Parent of Good, for all the blessings of this life, and if he does bless us in our basket and our store, cheerfully to acknowledge from whence our mercies flow, and to think, God has put this into my hand, not to make an idol of; not to be fuel to my lusts and passions, but that I may use thereof moderately myself, and communicate to the necessities of others, and herein glorify God.

4. It is a proof a man loves the world, when he feels much sorrow at losing any part of it. This may sometimes be the case from a kind providence, who permits losses and crosses for valuable ends, namely, to wean his affections from the world, to stir up his soul heaven-ward, and to let him see how exceeding empty every thing in the world is; now, if instead of bowing down to the divine Sovereignty, if instead of knowing the rod, and him that hath appointed it, and saying, *Shall I receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall I not receive evil?* I say, if instead of thus submitting himself to him who judges righteously, he grows peevish and fretful, and like that hasty man, 2 Kings, vi. 33. cries out, *This evil comes from the Lord; what should I wait for him any longer?* This surely marks him out a lover of money, and a miserable man. Or as their state is still more emphatically described, Isa. viii. 21. *They shall fret themselves, and curse their God and their king, and look upward. And they shall look into the earth; and behold, trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish.* The very picture of a worldly, carnal-hearted man, who
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is a little crossed in his designs in worldly things. See, how his countenance is fallen, he knits his brow and frowns, and is quite out of humour with every one. Poor earth-worm! how wretched is thy present situation! but how dismal the prospect hereafter.

5. But a greater proof still of a worldly man is, when he is not willing to part with a small share of what God has so plentifully bestowed upon him. Let a case be ever so urgent, whether to help on the cause of religion, or to help the poor, yet, he finds out excuses, and all arguments are lost upon him. Perhaps he seems to have every branch of religion besides, is zealous for his party, talks much of faith and love, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and of assurances; is a great exclaimer against pride and extravagances, and is sure there never was a good world since so much pride and fashions crept into it. Many of these miserable self-deceivers are to be met with up and down. O, that God may rent the veil from their hearts, if such are hearing me this day! and may he let you see your naked heart! And what will Jesus say to you at the last day, read and tremble, thou base drugde. Matt. xxv. 41—46. *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; a stranger, but yet took me not in, &c.* Compare the above with Isa. lviii. 7—11. and let it come home to thy worldly conscience. And, my dear hearers, let every one here present ask himself, — Am I the man, the worldly man? O what need of light and impartiality herein, that no one here should overlook himself?

II. Let us now consider the charges brought in against it, and here we have many in one. It is the

the root of all evils, the original words being in the plural.* This is a charge which will take some time in fairly opening up, and therefore I intreat you to hear me patiently, and apply closely.

1. It is the root of Idolatry, or rather it is Idolatry itself. *The covetous man who is an Idolater*, is a person we are forbid to keep company with. How frequently do we find the Lord guarding the people against Idolatry? There are in fact two commands out of the ten made against it, and we find many awful instances of God's displeasure are against Idolaters. Now what is an Idol? Any thing which is put in the place of God; but the lover of money, the covetous man, puts money in the place of God, therefore he is an Idolater, and as such cannot have eternal life abiding in him. He is then a direct, daring, professed enemy to the Cross of Christ, and in that state has the wrath of God abiding on him. He flies in the face of the commands of God, he rejects the council of God, and pours contempt upon the dying prayer of Jesus. *Father*, said he, *I will not that thou shouldest take them out of the world; but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil of the world*; but this prayer, yea, the dying agonies of the Prince of Life, and all the riches of redeeming grace, are set at nought by that wretch who is a lover of the present world. Such an one may be said to "give up his interest in both worlds; he is starved in this, and damned in that which is to come."

2. A second charge which I bring in against this child of perdition, and that is, it hardens the heart. Let the famished stranger, fatherless, or widow come shivering with cold, fore pinched with hunger, overwhelmed with distress; he can see the tears run down the emaciated cheeks of the widow; the nakedness of the poor orphans; can hear a
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* ΤΑΥΤΩ ΤΩ ΝΟΜΩ.

hundred moving intreaties, " For the sake of him who died for us, a little relief; pity this naked orphan, look upon a poor widow or stranger in distress:" No; they might as well address the stock of a tree; he feels nothing; nay, perhaps like a true *Nabal*, flies at them in a fury, 1 Sam. xxv. He is quite insensible to all calamities, deaf to all cries, and perhaps cannot only see misery without feeling, but can add insult to woe, and upbraid the afflicted in their distress. Therefore tell him of the mourning widow, the fatherless, the stranger, the prisoner, it is all nothing, he sleeps in a whole skin; warms himself with the sparks of his own kindling; *but this shall he have at God's hand, he shall lie down in sorrow.* How is the barbarous cruelty of the covetous described by Job, chap. xxiv. 7. Hear and tremble, thou earth-worm? *They cause the naked to lodge without cloathing, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rocks for want of a shelter. They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge from the poor. They cause him to go naked without cloathing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry.* Such is the horrid fruit of covetousness. Tell him of the low state of religion; it means nothing, what he prizes above heaven is secure, and all is well. O, what a wretched member of human society is such an one? and, like a swine, does no good while living; and it is well if he does any when he dies.

3. It blinds the understanding, and will not suffer its slave to have his eyes open. By its deceitful glass, he calls evil good, and good evil; puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; and hence he becomes wise in his own eyes, and prudent in his own sight: Isa. v. 20, 21. He sees no loveliness in Jesus, no beauties in holiness, no charms in the promises; all these are to him
vanity

vanity and vexation of spirit; a mere tasteless thing. The world, and the things of the world, are his darling topicks, to which he spreads a broad fail to catch every breeze. The sound of a good bargain to his dull ear, is a more pleasing echo than the sound of salvation, and the chink of money, than the words of Jesus. Nor does he see the snares of satan. The righteous foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself from it; but the wicked, the fools, pass on and are punished. Therefore *the wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools.*

4 It creates much confusion in the world, and therefore cannot come from God, or lead to him. Hence arise all the law-suits, discords, fightings, and disorders in the world. This, with a witness, divides a house against itself; the father against the son, and the son against the father. This separates the dearest friends, and sets every man's sword against his fellow, and breaks the closest ties of friendship. It fills the mind with many evil surmises, unjust jealousies, envy, discontents; and sets a man a hunting, like another *Nimrod*, for that which is not his own. Let a man read the histories of ages past, and look at what is daily presented before his eyes, and he will see the truth of all I am speaking.

5. It is the cause of all the knavery in the world. No man chuses to be a knave barely for the sake of being such, for any real pleasure in it, or any honour which he apprehends in the matter; but there is worldly pelf at the bottom: Hence come all the juggling, gaming-schemes, lotteries, slight-of-hand, swearing and forswearing, which are daily practised in the world. And indeed men are generally apprized of the evil lurking in every man's breast. See a man in a fair, how wary he is! how he eyes the animal he has a mind of, throughout the piece. He asks the faults; perhaps is told
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with horrid oaths there are none; yet he cannot believe, being, as it were, intuitively persuaded that he that swears will not stick at lying. And why dares he not send a child to the market? Because he knows that covetousness is in the market, and that knavery will be exercised, and he will be cheated.

6. It occasions apostacy. Hence says the apostle in the context, 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVILS; which while some have coveted after, they erred from faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.' Again, 2 Tim. iv. 10. *Demas has forsaken me, HAVING LOVED THIS PRESENT WORLD.* See another dismal effect of covetousness in Josh. chap. vii. Perhaps this base-born temper has occasioned more apostates than all others put together! O, the bewitching charms attending this sin above all others! I will close this remark with that strong description of our Lord's, *He also that received seed among thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.* Matt. xiii. 22.

7. It has been very often the cause of deliberate murder; for as the covetous man is the tool of the devil, as much as a drunkard; so he generally drives him on, that many a man has been murdered in cool blood purely for the sake of what he might possess: the murderer had no particular antipathy against him; but finding it not possible to come at his ends any other way, without his being detected, he has therefore made sure work of the matter this way. Hence the numerous murders which have been committed in house-breaking

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have generally sprung from this base-born temper. In like manner the many murders committed upon the high-road have been from the same cursed principle; and in several countries, especially in France, I am told, it is the dire custom always to murder before they rob; so that we see the love of money banishes every humane temper, and sets at defiance the laws of both God and man.

Lastly, If it is the root of so many evils, we may fairly infer it is the cause of eternal damnation. Such we are told in the context, *fall into a temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. They err likewise from the faith, not barely from the theory, but from the life and practice of faith.* I think there is but one instance in the Book of God of any being sent empty away, who came to our Saviour, which was the rich young man, Mark x. 22. He went away grieved at what our Lord had said to him, and why was he grieved? Why! because *he had great possessions.* Well, and what would a covetous man now say, if the same thing was proposed to him, viz. *Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and take up thy cross and follow me?* He would in like manner go away grieved; yea, and perhaps angry too. Let any man who is sensible of the value of his soul, but duly consider what our Lord says, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* I say, let him consider that awful saying, and one would think it would cure him of the desire of being rich. Against this fearful evil, St. John is very particular, that none might think themselves out of danger, he addresses himself to the three different classes of believers, and, lest he should not be pointed enough, he repeats the matter over again, *I have written unto you, little children, young men and fathers,* and what is it he

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would

would enforce by this solemn preface? *Love not the world, nor the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* 1 John, ii. 15. Can any thing then be more perempt? Is not such an one an heir of perdition? and if he dies in that situation, he cannot enter into Everlasting Happiness? Hear what the wise son of Syrach says, "There is not a more wicked thing than a covetous man; and nothing more detestable than he who loves money: Such a man setteth his own soul to sale; because while he liveth, he casteth away his bowels of compassion."

Now, my dear friends, are these indictments just? Are they the thing? Do you see their force? Then you shall be jury upon the prisoner. Are you resolved that he shall die, shall be nailed to the cross? Are you determined to give him shelter no longer? Then let the king's officers take him forth, and let him not live an hour longer. Come, then, Holy Zeal, accompanied with thy Heaven-born companion Love, and take the Sword of the Spirit, and destroy this enemy to God and man immediately. Let him no longer deceive the religious nations: Let him no longer be sheltered under any excuse, however fair it may be. But to be deeply serious, and to speak plain, what need is there to be jealous over ourselves with godly jealousy? lest this base temper, or indeed any other, should steal our hearts away from him who died for us. Do your thoughts run much upon the perishable things of time and sense? Let conscience now act an honest part. Are your desires very brisk and eager for the same thing? Does a little gain give you much pleasure, and a little loss much pain? Above all, do you feel much reluctance in parting with a little of what God has given you? Consider how much you fall short of the scribes and pharisees; many of these gave a fifth-part of
their

their substance either to pious or charitable uses; but how many called believers, neither give a fifth nor a fiftieth part of their substance in works of piety and mercy? Nay, do not they look upon every thing expended that way as entirely lost?

What need of being open to conviction in this affair? Let not the evil lie lurking unseen, unfelt by us. As I said before, it is a sin which is sheltered under so many fair excuses, and plausible pretences, that we need the greatest impartiality lest it should be over-looked. Perhaps you say, "I do not want to cheat or defraud any one, I love upright and honest dealings." Observe, it is not cheating or defrauding which the text is speaking against, it is the love of money: you may gain it honestly, and yet love it; you may be a fair trader, and yet a mere earth-worm, a covetous man, who is a real idolater before God. Be watchful that this base temper does not steal in upon you. Read frequently, and meditate upon such passages as speak expressly against it. *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, AND THE CARES OF THIS LIFE, and so that day come upon you un-awares.* Luke xxi. 34.

Frequently consider, the many awful examples mentioned in the scriptures; as our first parents coveting the forbidden fruit; the case of Achan, Judas, Demas, with many other instances.

Lastly, the most effectual antidote against the love of money, is the love of God. Pursue it with thy whole heart. Remember, he that seeketh silver, shall never be satisfied with silver; but he who has the Lord for his portion, has chosen that good part which not only satisfies him, but shall never be taken away from him.

The Good Shepherd.

A
S E R M O N,

Delivered

By THOMAS TAYLOR.



FOR THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD, BEHOLD, I, EVEN I
WILL BOTH SEARCH MY SHEEP AND SEEK THEM
OUT. Ezek. xxxiv. 11.

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD: THE GOOD SHEPHERD
GIVETH HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP. John x. 11.

Mors Christi vita piorum.

GERH. MEDITAT.

A SERMON, &c.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John x. 10.

THE many endearing names given to our Saviour, in holy writ, are very expressive of his bounty, care and tenderness, to such as receive him. Hence he is called *Light*; *I am the light of the world*. Likewise he is called *Bread*; *I am the bread of life, the bread which came down from heaven*. Also he is called a *Sun*; *For the Lord is a sun. To you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings*. So here in this chapter we find him called by the simple appellation of a *Shepherd*, as in several parts of the Old Testament; see Psal. xxiii. and Ezek. xxxiv. A shepherd, in the days of old, seems to have been a very honourable vocation, and they were wont to have very great care and tenderness of their flocks. Under the same simple, yet expressive, image, is set forth the care, pity, tenderness, watchfulness, and benignity of him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. How tenderly is he drawn, under this character, by the evangelical prophet? "The Lord is a shepherd, he gathereth the lambs with his arm, he beareth them on his bosom, and leadeth gently such as are with young." Isa. xl. 11. So in the context, *I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The wolf cometh not but to kill and destroy, I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*. Charming language! Worthy of our closest attention. May the Lord

help me to open, and apply, the text in a way and manner which may be useful to each of your souls! I shall endeavour, by Divine Assistance,

I. To consider the Dignity of the Divine Messenger; *I am come.*

II. The important Message; *That we might have life.*

III. The plenitude; *That we might have it more abundantly.*

He did not send an angel on this wonderful errand; the business was far too weighty and important; nor a legion of angels; that would have been an honour far, very far, from what we deserved; yet could not all the angels in heaven have sustained the awful vengeance due to human crimes. O, no: *He looked, but there was none to save; he wondered, but there was none to uphold;* all declared the arduous task, knowing the burden was too heavy. As *Milton* sings,

“He ask’d, but all the heavenly choir stood mute;

“And silence was in heaven.”

Finding all refuge fail, his own arm brought salvation. This shews,

I. Great Love. *In his love, and in his pity he redeemed us, and the angel of his presence saved us. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have eternal life. So that in this was manifested the love of God to us, that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.* His love was entirely free: There was nothing in us to attract the divine favour. No form or comeliness; no beauty in us that he should desire us. As it is said, of his own free will he begat us; so, of his own free will he loved us. O, Love without end, and without measure Grace! Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man, that thou

thou should visit him? He, who created millions of creatures (perhaps millions of worlds) of the noblest frame and texture, angels who excell in strength and dignity; adoring Seraphim, and knowing Cherubim, orders and ranks of which we have no conception, and whose very presence has too dazzling lustre for us even to behold; yet should fix his peculiar love upon a poor sinful object, whose origin is dust, yea, so love it, as really to unite himself with it; assume its poor, frail, indigent nature, and be made in all things like unto it, sin only excepted. He, who spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast; before whose presence the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy; who meteth out the heavens with a span, who comprehends the dust of the earth, who weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; who walketh upon the wings of the wind; be astonished, O my soul; be astonished, O ye heavens; be astonished, O my dear fellow-sinners; *He takes his delight among the sons of men.*

2. *I am come that they might have life!* This shews us the most amazing humility. Should a prince go into the dungeon of some notorious rebel, and talk familiarly with him, advise with him about his pardon, and offer to abide a prisoner for him; yea, and suffer shame and pain in his stead, would be such an act of condescension as was never heard, or read of, amongst poor mortals: But what parity is there betwixt the most dignified persons under the sun, and the infinitely great Jehovah? But here we see the great humility of Jesus; he divests himself of all his dazzling glory, and appears a worm amongst worms; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

“ Wrapt in swathes the immortal stranger;

“ Man with men we have seen lying in a manger.”

He humbled himself; he came down from heaven;

ven; he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many, are the surprising declarations of the word of truth. Behold him there, lifting up his two little hands in the manger! Hark, his infant cries! how piteous! how helpless! See, those eyes of flame, wrapt up in an infant's slumber! lovely babe! wonderful child! Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill towards man! See that poor dusty traveller, sat on a stone at Jacob's well! See his parched lips; see the streaks of sweat running down his face! O, my God, let me not seek my own ease, my own honour, while I see thee submitting to the lowest, meanest station in life. See that distressed man of sorrows, praying, agonizing, groaning, with strong cries and tears! O Lord, hell hears, and trembles; and heaven looks down astonished: Only man, stupid man, takes no notice. See, that lovely countenance indignantly spit upon, rudely buffeted, ridiculed and scorned with ugly faces, and unjustly sentenced to die! See his death attended with every aggravating circumstance of barbarity and cruelty! Hark, the doleful accents, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*

"O, Lamb of God, was ever pain,

"Was ever love like thine!"

Bow down my pride; lie in the dust mine honour, while I see my gracious God and King stooping down to the gloomy recesses of the grave. O, well might he say, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*

3. *I am come!* This shews amazing pity. Well might the prophet say, *In his love and in his pity he redeemed them.* Pity has misery for its object, and is a most blessed temper of the soul, and argues a greatness of soul far surpassing all the famed achievements of the most renowned heroes. The heart which bleeds over human calamities,

is that which shews a true sublimity of soul, which all the pomp and parade of man can never attain unto. How have instances of generous compassion struck and melted my hard heart, and made mine eyes like fountains? But all we can find or read of amongst poor worms of the earth, are but faint emanations of his pity, whose heart is made of tenderness, and whose bowels meet with love. He saw us, poor wanderers, torn and lost, and bleeding to death, and no eye pitied us to do us good, but he being touched with the softest sympathy, ran to our relief. O, our case was truly desperate! No seraph, no angel, durst undertake the case of poor, fallen, ruined rebels! A victim was wanting; but the blood of bulls and goats, only availed to the purifying of the flesh, in a ceremonial way; but it is the blood of Jesus alone, which makes the true atonement of the soul. This he did not spare; this he freely parted with. This, this is the true fountain, the living fountain to wash a spotted soul from all its pollution, and to make it white as snow. O, yes,

“ It runs divinely clear,

“ A fountain deep and wide;

“ ’Twas opened with a soldier’s spear,

“ In my Redeemer’s side.”

O, my Jesus, my loving, bleeding Jesus, let a large degree of the same love and tenderness be transfused into my heart, and into all who hear me at this hour.

4. This coming of the True Shepherd of Israel, implies great patience. The insults offered to his Divine Majesty, were of so provoking, so irritating a nature, that he might have poured out the vials of his righteous indignation, and have sunk the rebel-race into the bottomless-pit. What scenes of barbarity, injustice, loathsome impurities, lies and deceit; horrid blasphemies, scorn and contempt are daily perpetrated, and have been from the

the beginning, before the eyes of his purity ! What is all history, but one continued scene of murder, plunder, cruelty, deceit, pride, guile, with every abomination which can even either be thought of, or named. Many of which, chaste ears could not endure to hear, nor tender hearts stand the direful relation ? I have often thought if the most patient man, mere man, that ever lived, had the government of the world upon his hands, and saw all the abominations which omniscience beholds, he would in a moment loose the pillars thereof, and annihilate it at once. But Jesus came to save it from ruin ; came to bring it back to God ; to restore the divine habitation ; came to raise it from its ruins, and to repair its breaches ; in a word, he came that *we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.*

5. This shews his infinite goodness to poor lost man. His goodness is often sung in lively accents by the Royal Singer of Israel, as well many other inspired saints ; and a variety of instances are marked out as true images, which are intended to raise grateful sensations in the minds of such as are the objects of this goodness ; and indeed creation and providence, abound with such instances as all the wisdom of angels can never fully investigate, nor the tongues of men and angels can set forth. But as the sun out-shines the midnight-stars, so does redemption all the rest. Redemption ! it was creation more sublime ! O, it was the labour, the bleeding, dying labour of the skies, yea, of the God of heaven and earth. Goodness does not seem to be so much the designation of any one attribute, as a happy assemblage of them all put together : a bright constellation of all the gracious properties of the Deity, shining forth in a variety of rays, or falling down in showers of rich blessings on every side ; but all in one great cluster meet in that adorable person, whom we stile the Saviour of the World.

World. Indeed he is the very basis upon which the whole fabrick of goodness rests, and in him all fullness dwells, a fullness for every ruined sinner.

II. Having considered the glorious messenger a little. I am now to consider the message itself, which is Life, *I am come that they might have life.* This, by the way, shews that we were dead; for if it were not so, he could not be said to come *that we might have life.* He might have said, "I am come that ye might have health, or the blessings of life." But he does not say so; but, *I am come that ye might have life.*

I. He is come to reconcile the offended Deity, and the whole race of sinners. Hence it is said, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them;* and to every one who believes, to him is committed the word of reconciliation. There was an awful partition drawn between sinful man and his Divine Maker. The infinite purity of his Divine Majesty could not, in any wise, be united to the sinner, without the interposition of a Mediator, and his justice, that holy attribute, which stands engaged for the honour of all the rest, lifted up the glittering sword, and threatened eternal ruin to the offender. But now God in our nature, the good Shepherd, steppeth forth, and freely lays down his life for his sheep. He breaks down the middle wall of partition, and so makes peace by the blood of the cross. Now, poor sinner, thou *mayest enter into the holiest with boldness, by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he hath consecrated for thee through the vail, that is to say, his flesh.* Heb. x. 19, 20. Glorious Peace-maker! Well mayest thou be called the Prince of Peace, who came that we might have life and peace. Well might angels sing, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men.* While the Lamb that was slain

slain is in the midst of the throne, we may come boldly thereunto, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need. O, come, my dear fellow-sinners, come speedily, ask fervently, O, believe, and peace flows into your soul.

2. In order that we might have life, he came to repeal the law of condemnation, that the law of the spirit of life might make us free from the law of sin and death. The giving of the law was not intended to convey life unto us: O, no; it was the ministration of condemnation, and by it no sinner could ever be justified. It was given to shew us a little of that awful majesty against which we had sinned. It was given to shew what we ought to be. It was given that the offence might abound, and thereby our doom revealed, so that from that quarter there is no remission of sins, no peace, no life, no way for a lost sinner ever to be admitted into the divine favour: No; nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation from the Lord. There is no repentance, no forgiveness, though it should be sought ever so carefully with tears. But now Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, he himself being made a curse for us, yea, the very curse which hung upon the tree.*

“ The deadly writing now I see

“ Nail'd with thy body on the tree;

“ Torn with the nails which pierc'd thy hands,

“ Th' old covenant no longer stands.”

3. He came to enlighten the dark understanding. For this end he is called in the scripture, *the Sun of Righteousness; the Bright and Morning Star; the Day-spring from on High; the Light of the World; the True Light, which lighteneth every man which cometh into the world.* Poor man is groping in the dark for happiness; but alas! his back is turned upon the desired blessing, and he neither sees his
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real disease, nor does he see his true remedy. He sees no beauty in the precious promises of the gospel, nor does he see any thing awful in the threatenings, he knows not whither he goes, because darkness hath blinded his eyes. But hark, O, hark! what the Redeemer says, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty such as are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* Luke iv. 18, 19. Glad tidings! Welcome sound! O, thou poor beggar, sitting by the way side, who art pressed and rebuked by the multitude of thy sins, doubts and fears, cry out, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me; Lord, let mine eyes be opened, that I may see the world's emptiness, and my dear Saviour's fullness, yea, that I may see him the fairest amongst ten thousand, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. Now sin appears exceeding sinful, and holiness exceeding amiable. Now the ways of true wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Now the soul sees the noisome pit, the miry clay, from whence his feet are pluckt, and that blessed Rock upon which they are placed.

4. He comes to enliven the soul. Hence he is stiled *The Resurrection and the Life. The Prince of Life. The Life of Men. The Quickening Spirit. The Living Vine.* All which names are very significant; very expressive and full of meaning, considering the dear Redeemer in his mediatorial capacity. Life is so essentially necessary to true religion, that the latter cannot be without the former. The truest system, the exactest regularity of conduct, and every other thing, however creditable in the eyes of men, are but dead forms, only like painted fruit upon a dead tree. Like a

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*lamp

lamp without oil, so are all externals without life. As a body without a soul, such is religion without divine life. It is the main spring in the heavenly machine, and that which puts every wheel in proper motion. What a dark, cold, dead world must this be without the warming, chearing beams of the sun? As the sun is the light, so is he the life of the world. Now as a world without a sun would be nothing but a dead lump, a heavy mass of confused and useless matter; so is that soul which has not this divine quickener within. He cannot grow, he cannot run, he cannot fight the battles of the Lord; he cannot eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; he cannot rejoice, nor be truly happy. O, thou Second Adam! thou quickener divine, dart one glance, one enlivening ray now into every heart before thee, so that it may be said to each, *When Christ who is your life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

5. He came to purify the soul. It was not only dark and dead, but alas, the abomination of desolation stood in that which should be the holy place. That which should be the holy abode, is become the habitation of devils, and the cage of unclean birds. The lovely throne of the Redeemer is overthrown, and all over polluted, nor can he take any satisfaction or delight there. Instead of love, peace, gentleness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering, sincerity and truth, alas, alas, here is nothing to be seen but hatred, rage and anger, pride and self-sufficiency, malignity and deceit, lust and every cursed temper. And how can this infernal rubbish be cast out? The stains are so deep, and the defiling so loathsome, that verily thou shouldest wash thyself with nitre and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity would cleave to thee. Now, *without holiness no man can see the Lord*; and whatsoever defiles, can in no wise enter into heaven. What then shall be done in this case?

ease? Verily Jesus says, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.* Here we see a fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Glory be to his dear name, he loved the church, and gave himself for her, that he might wash her with water by the Word, and present her to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

“ What tho’ all I am is sin,
 “ Sin cannot break my peace,
 “ Here is blood to wash me clean,
 “ From all unrighteousness:
 “ This shall wash me white as snow,
 “ On this for all things I confide,
 “ Only Jesus will I know,
 “ And Jesus crucified.”

The Bride of the Lamb must be like the king’s daughter, all glorious within, so that when all collected together they may sing, *To him who loved us, and redeemed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory for ever.*

6. He came that he might comfort the poor soul. Sin having brought death into the world, and all our woe, hath in like manner planted tears upon all cheeks, and fixed sorrows in all hearts. How thin is the partition, and how short is the space betwixt the most transporting temporary enjoyments and the most exquisite sorrow in its last and final ruin? The poor hungry soul, ever craving after that which it has not, is continually going to the broken cisterns of worldly enjoyments; and though it has met with nothing but one continued disappointment, yet it renews the vain, the fruitless attempt, but all to no purpose; the bleeding anguish is still unassuaged, its wounds are still gaping, unmolified, unbound up, and a restless discontent still takes place. But here is the true Balm of Gilead, here is the true Physician, who heals the broken in heart, and bindeth up all their wounds. The leaves of this Tree of Life are

are for the healing of the nations. He can say, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Here, thou restless wanderer, here is thy sure defence. Here is the balm of thy poor restless spirit. Rest thou in the Lord, wait patiently for him; so shalt thou find real consolation.

7. As he came that we might be thus holy and happy, so he came that he might dwell in us. This is confirmed from what is said in the prophets, *I will dwell in you; I will walk in you,* says Jehovah. Again, *If any man will do the will of my Father, him will my Father honour, and my Father and I will come to him, and make our abode with him.* The Apostle makes the highest degree of happiness to consist in having *Christ in us the hope of glory.* It is true, one might here take up the inquiry with the Royal Adorer; *But will God indeed dwell with man?* yes he will; for *behold, the tabernacle of God is with man, and he will dwell with him, and God himself will be with him and be his God.* Glorious condescension! most stupendous benignity! That he who fills immensity will vouchsafe to make his humble residence in poor dust and ashes! Happy you cannot be if this divine guest is not in you, and miserable you cannot be while he sways his peaceful sceptre in your heart. Behold then ye mourning tribes, the Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come to his temple, that he may be your Almighty Support, and Inseparable Companion.

8. He is come that he might protect and defend his divine purchase, and see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. He knows there are many wolves of prey, many thieves and robbers, who are daily laying in wait to devour, and will leave no method untried to allure or force from the path of life: and as it is a material part of a shepherd's employment to defend and watch over his flock, so we find Jesus fulfilling his office, and
stands

stands up for their defence and protection, and has promised that such shall never perish, nor shall any pluck them out of his hands. His church is the lilly which is among the thorns; like the flaming bush in the wilderness; but while Jehovah is in the midst it cannot be consumed. As the psalmist says, *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, he maketh me to lie down in green pastures besides the still waters; yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* Thus, they who trust in the Lord, are like Mount Sion, which cannot be moved.

III. The plenitude is what we are now to consider. *That we might have life more abundantly.* Here seems a tacit reference to the state of man before his fall; he had wisdom, life and happiness, but that was lost, being forfeited through disobedience; but from that source nothing can be expected, and all springs of hope being cut off, Christ, the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, came that we might have life, and that we have it more abundantly than if man had not sinned: that is, that we might abound in every divine blessing, so that the breach is amply repaired.

I. That we might abound in divine wisdom, not the wisdom which puffeth up, but that which truly humbles; seeing the man knows more of himself, his own ignorance, weakness and depravity, and learns to have less confidence in himself. Solomon says, *He that trusteth his own heart is a fool;* but he who has this divine wisdom trusts in the Lord, and happy is he. He glories, only, in the Cross of the Lord Jesus, and is determined to know nothing save Christ, and him crucified. He knows more of the emptiness of the present world, and is sensible that all in it is vanity and vexation of spirit, and was never designed to be the portion

of an immortal spirit, a soul redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. He labours and toils in it, and such he must while in the land of his captivity; but it is his cross; it is not his felicity, not his joy, not the one thing needful, so that he is enabled to say, *The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.*

“ The world can no refreshment give,
 “ Shall I its deadly draughts receive,
 “ ’Scap’d from the hellish lake;
 “ Nay, but I turn to the pure flood,
 “ Which issues from the throne of God,
 “ And Living Waters take.”

By the same light he sees more into the devices of Satan. It does not appear that our first parents were so sensible of this malignant foe, which was one cause of their being taken captive by him at his will; but now, through him who is the Light of Life, we can mark out the lurking places of the artful fiend, and, through mercy divine, can avoid them. Through the same all-chearing ray, we are enabled to see more into the nature of our redemption, the amazing wonders of grace, manifested in our incarnate God and King. Here is every attribute sprinkled with the Blood of the Cross, and shines with an inconceivable lustre; sends forth a fragrance, a heavenly fragrance, far more excellent than all the delicious spices of *Arabia*. Great, unspeakably great, is the mystery of godliness; our God being manifest in the flesh: so great that angels desire to look into it. Wonders, stupendous wonders, of grace, environ the astonished soul, rush on her from the Bleeding Cross, and enclose her the prisoner of amaze; yea, they make her cry out, O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom, and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! This clearly shews what is the believer’s privilege and duty, viz. To rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks.

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2. As through the coming of Jesus we may abound in wisdom, yea go on from light to light, till our path, like the shining light, shines more and more to the perfect day; so we may likewise abound in divine power. Indeed this, we find, we stand in need of; our journey lies up the hill, and is often rough and thorny, as well as beset with enemies on every side. But through the strength of Israel we may stop the mouths of lions, in weakness be made strong, wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens. Of ourselves we are not sufficient to think any thing which is good; but through Christ strengthening we can do all things. Let all the powers of darkness combine against the soul, yet they cannot shake his confidence who goes out in the strength of the Lord God. Nay, it is the energy divine which works in him, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Thus is he strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, while every fiery dart is quenched in the Blood of Jesus, and the Soldier of Christ goes on from strength to strength, from conquering and to conquer, till he is more than conqueror, through him who loveth us. Even the feeble may become like the house of David, and the house of David like the angel of the Lord. He who waits upon God is sure to renew his strength, he may run without wearying; he can walk without fainting.

3. It is his will that we should abound in divine love. Wisdom and power, without love, compose the character of the devil! He knows enough, and has power enough; but then he cannot love, and there he remains in his own enmity against his Maker, and against his own peace; and for want of this wanders up and down seeking rest, but cannot find it. But, now, Jesus, the Father's brightness, is come that this Godlike property may abound in us more abundantly, and
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the soul being baptized in this heavenly flame, may be transformed into that heavenly image, and wear the divine signature for ever. There the loving Jesus sits upon his own loving throne, making all things new. There is no fear in love; O no, perfect love casts it out. The heart without love is just like the creation in a dark and tempestuous night; but when love fills the soul, it is just like the warm shining mid-day sun, after the refreshing vernal showers. O, what a heaven upon earth, when a soul delights in reproaches, contempt, weariness and pain, and labours for him who died a world to redeem! How does it love every human creature; yea, its very enemies, and is willing to wash their feet, to do the meanest offices, so that they may be won over to the Lord who bought them! Poor fallen nature will do no such thing; it will not stoop so low as to put up with a slight injury, or a trifle of an affront: it will shew *a proper spirit* on such occasions. Such is the reasoning of the world: But *love hopeth, endureth all things; many waters cannot quench it, the floods cannot drown it.* This is to the soul, what sap is to the trees, which circulates through the branches, and causes fruit and verdure to continue. Such is the case with the man whose heart abounds with love. He is *like a tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth fruit in his season.* Psal. i. 3.

4. The Good Shepherd is come that our joy might abound. This is what the man of the world is a stranger unto. He knows of no kind of joy, but what is of an earthly kind. Getting of money, soaring in fame, strutting about in finery, and sensual gratifications are the principal objects of his joy. But if he will look into the Bible, he finds the saints rejoicing in different objects. *Thou hast put joy and gladness into my heart more than when corn, or wine, or oil encreaseth,* is the charming song of one, so that he could say in another

another place, *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for it well becometh the just to be thankful.* Psalm xxxiii. 1. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and covered me with the robe of righteousness: he hath decked me like a bridegroom, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.* Isa. lxi. 10. *I will see you again, saith our Lord, and ye shall have joy, and your joy no man taketh from you. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Rom. xiv. 17. So that the creed of the adult believer may be summed thus up, *We are the circumcision, which worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* Phil. iii. 3. It is true, the generality of such as have tastes of the divine goodness, live vastly short of their privileges; but that does not alter the truth of God. That is their own fault: for if they would hearken to his commandment, their peace would flow like a river, and their righteousness, yea, their joys, like the waves of the sea. Hence our Saviour says, *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask that your joy may be full.* This is the joy which will stand the agonies of a death-bed, the scrutiny of the judgment-seat, and the terrors of a flaming world. It is such as tunes the harps of the saints in glory, and will fill their mouths with praises to all eternity.

5. He is come that we might abound in true purity; that we might be like *the king's daughter all glorious within.* To sprinkle clean water upon us that we might be clean. To purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He cries out in the prophet, *Come, let us reason together; though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be made white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* Yea, says he, *I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross,*
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and take away all thy tin. Isa. i. 18. Every unholy temper is certainly a very unhappy temper, so that if we desire to be happy, we should labour to be holy; and nothing can make us so but the purifying Blood of Jesus. Adam had this divine image upon his soul when he came pure from the hands of his Maker; so Jesus came to restore that lost image, to make a full end of sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, so that we may be steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in every good word and work to the praise of his name.

6. But after all, if in this life we have only hope in Christ, we should be of all men the most miserable. But he has promised, that where he is, there his servants shall be also: that he is gone to prepare a place for them, and will come again, and receive them to himself; and has thus prayed, *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* This divine prayer will certainly be accomplished, for he cannot pray in vain; so that they, who by grace are fitted and prepared, may enter into the joy of their Lord; to be released from the crosses and trials of life; the infirmities of a frail dying body; the temptations of a subtle and spiteful enemy, and every circumstance which can create any pain, anxiety or sorrow. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest. The inhabitant of that land shall no more say, *I am sick.* There our eyes shall see the king in his beauty, and behold the land which is very far off.

“ ’Tis there we bathe our weary souls,

“ In seas of endless rest;

“ And not a wave of trouble roll,

“ Across our peaceful breast.”

Nor shall the body be forgotten: no; the Second Adam, the Quickening Spirit, the Lord from Heaven, shall quicken it also. He that is the Resurrection

urrection and the Life will raise it from the bondage of corruption into the Glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. It is true, it is sown in corruption, but it shall be raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, but it shall be raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, but it shall be raised in power: it is sown a natural body, but it shall be raised a spiritual body. In a word, he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, *so that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.*

Thus the Good Shepherd came that we, his poor lost wanderers, *might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.* Stand astonished, O my soul, at the amazing love, the unparelled humanity, the unconquered patience, the bleeding pity, and unbounded goodness of this True Shepherd, who came to seek and to save that which was lost. O, ye Angels! ye Sons of the Morning; ye Flaming, Pure Fires, what did ye think, when ye saw your Maker become incarnate, and lying helpless in a manger? What did ye think when ye saw him tempted in the wilderness? when ye saw him a poor wanderer in this vale of tears? when ye saw him sweating, agonizing blood, in groans and strong cries? What did ye think, when ye saw his glorious face indignantly spit upon; rudely buffeted, and assaulted with vile scoffs and reproaches? What did ye think when ye saw him stretched upon the fatal tree, expiring in pain, torture and ignominy; and, lastly, lie cold and pale in the silent tomb! O, my dear hearers, well may your eyes weep! gracious signs of a heart which feels, of a soul sensible of such amazing love. O, my soul, how canst thou utter articulate sounds whilst thou art contemplating, and setting forth such an amazing tragedy. Dear souls, one and all, embrace, O, now, embrace this messenger.

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For every ruined rebel here he died: He came to seek and save that which was lost. O joytul tidings! heart-reviving sound! Arise, then, my dear fellow-sinner, wash away thy sins, now believing in his name. See, thou impenitent wretch, how just thy condemnation will be, if thou rejectest this precious Saviour! If thou preferrest thy money, thy credit, thy friends, thy gratifications, to this alone Saviour; surely thy hell must be a hot one: O, bend, bow down, yea, break, heart of stone, so shalt thou be healed.

Lastly, let us honour the great Ambassador of our Peace and Salvation. O, let every pulse beat to his praise. Being once brought into his fold, let us not wander from him any more; but let us abide in him, so shall he abide in us, and our fruit will appear to his praise. Let it excite us to fill up every station in life as becomes the purchase of his blood; the travail of his righteous, suffering soul. Let his steps be attended unto, closely pursued, so may we urge our way, till we cast our crowns before him, lost in wonder and amazement for ever more. Even so, Lord Jesus! *Amen!*

6 SE 55

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